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# INTRODUCTION

Benilde-St. Margaret's is a Catholic co-educational junior and senior high school with a college preparatory emphasis. We are happy to have this opportunity to introduce you to the junior high program (grades 7-8).

We are a school with a strong academic commitment to our students. We provide a caring yet structured environment. To meet the diverse needs of junior high students, we have a comprehensive curriculum and offer a wide variety of extracurricular activities.

The focus of the junior high program is the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, social, and physical development of the young person. Our program includes a solid Catholic base of academic religion classes, liturgies, and prayer services. Homerooms meet every day for prayer, announcements, and occasional activities and special interest meetings. Relevant issues such as peer pressure, decision-making, self-esteem, diversity, and healthy social relationships are also addressed in the junior high.

Our curriculum includes three levels of English, literature, and mathematics: (1) concepts (for students working and/or testing below grade level or having difficulty learning in that area), (2) standard (grade level), and (3) accelerated (for students working and testing significantly above grade level).

The junior high curriculum emphasizes the development of language arts skills. In addition to separate English and literature classes, all students have the opportunity to study a world language of their choosing.

Our math curriculum includes pre-algebra, algebra and geometry. Basic skills are strengthened in preparation for higher math.

In the junior high technology is regarded as an important tool for learning. Each student is provided a personal laptop for daily academic use. Technology is integrated into all areas of the curriculum.

Each year our curriculum includes an area of enrichment selected for in-depth, cross-curriculum study. Seventh graders develop an understanding of community, while 8th graders focus on the earth and its environment.

At Benilde-St. Margaret's the 7th and 8th graders are on a quarter system. Some courses are offered for one semester, while other courses such as mathematics, science, and world language are year-long studies. Quarter grade reports, as well as other teacher updates, are posted online for students and parents. In addition, parent-teacher conferences are held twice each year.

Our program is designed to prepare the student for continuing education in high school and college as well as for life-long learning. We are deeply committed to Catholic education and to our students.

# English/Literature

## English

*Year-long course required of 7th and 8th graders on three levels concepts, standard, and accelerated*

In English students study grammar, usage, mechanics, speaking, writing, and spelling. Areas of emphasis at each level are determined by student strengths and needs. Students are encouraged to improve their understanding and communication by relating the different areas of language study. Students also apply their writing skills across the curriculum.

## Literature

*Year-long course required of 7th and 8th graders on three levels concepts, standard, and accelerated*

In literature students develop vocabulary, comprehension skills, and ability to interpret and evaluate written material. Students are introduced to both classical and modern literature of every genre. The 7th grade course emphasizes American literature, the 8th grade course, mythology and legends. Students are encouraged to read independently and develop life-long reading habits.

# Fine Art Art

**All students are required to take one semester of Art. Eighth graders must choose one of the offerings.**

## Art 7

*One semester course, meets every other day, required of 7th graders*

Seventh grade art is a course designed to introduce and increase the knowledge of the elements and principals of art while giving the students opportunities to try multiple types of media. Students will learn fine arts skills through painting, printmaking, drawing and sculpture. Lessons are well integrated with contemporary and more traditional art forms so that students will understand and appreciate the influences of art from many genres and cultures.

## Art 8

*One semester course, meets every other day, open to 8th graders*

Eighth grade art is a course designed to build upon and increase the student's knowledge of various elements, principles, and techniques of art. In addition, students will learn to analyze, compare, interpret, and evaluate works of art. Students will analyze their own work and the work of other artists. Students will further develop their art skills with various media and techniques.

# Design-Engineer-Innovate 8

*One semester course, meets every other day, \*open to 8th graders*

By using Design Thinking strategies students will create solutions for several challenges through-out the semester. Students will create prototypes (using multiple types of materials, CAD programs, and tools), test these ideas improving with each iteration. DEI (Design-Engineer-Innovate) will also highlight the collaboration of engineering and artistic practices by creating solutions that exhibit an understanding of constraints, optimization, functionality, and beauty. Take advantage of the opportunity to develop the Designer, the Engineer, and the Innovator in you with this class.

*\*If the number of course requests exceeds the maximum class size, students will be drawn from a pool. Remaining students will be placed on a waitlist.*

# Fine Art Music

## Band

*Year-long course, meets every other day, available to 7th and 8th graders as an option to choir or orchestra*

This course teaches intermediate and advanced musical concepts. It is a building program and a continuation from elementary school. Suggested proficiency is one to two years playing experience. The band concentrates on larger performance skills and works to improve overall ensemble sound. Students will work on improving their rhythm, technique, and style. Two major concerts are performed each year and are required.

## Choir

*Year-long course, meets every other day, available to 7th and 8th graders as an option to band or orchestra*

This course is intended to develop beginning to intermediate music competencies. Fundamentals are stressed with emphasis on performances. Music includes sacred, classical, and pop tunes. Attendance is required at two performances, the Christmas concert in December and the spring concert in May. There is an opportunity to participate in junior high pop choir, which meets weekly after school.

## String Orchestra

*Year-long course, meets every other day, available to 7th and 8th graders as an option to choir or band*

This course is designed for players of orchestral stringed instruments (violin, viola, cello, and bass) who have had one to two years of playing experience. Advanced beginner/intermediate level techniques, scales, and exercises are taught and practiced in the class, along with the study of orchestral music from various styles and periods. Students will broaden and refine fundamental skills and prepare for the transition to more advanced level playing. Performances in a variety of venues including school Masses, community and school events, and seasonal concerts with band and choir may require some after-school and before-school participation. The students will at times combine with high school players in order to perform larger works, as well as portions of oratorios to be performed with the choir.

# Mathematics

## Pre-Algebra 7

*Year-long course offered to 7<sup>th</sup> graders on three levels concepts, standard, and accelerated*

In this course students will investigate the multiple representations of numbers and work towards mastery of the computation of those numbers. Students will also learn how to solve many forms of linear equations and inequalities, including proportions and problems that require the application of percent. Connections between algebra, geometry, and data analysis will be examined throughout the year. In order to improve their abilities to communicate about mathematics, students will apply these pre-algebra topics to real-life problems as they learn problem-solving techniques. Students will also connect mathematics to technology through the introduction to graphing on computers and the use of spreadsheets.

## Algebra Fundamentals 8

*Year-long course offered to 8<sup>th</sup> graders on two levels concepts and standard*

This is an algebra course that covers aspects of geometry, trigonometry, probability, and statistics. Students will learn a variety of methods to solve basic and complex linear equations, linear inequalities, systems of linear equations, and how to graph these functions. Students will apply these topics to real-life situations as they learn problem-solving techniques. Students will use technology for math games, instructional videos, introduction to graphing on computers and the use of spreadsheets.

## Algebra I

*Year-long accelerated course*

This is an algebra course that covers aspects of geometry, trigonometry, probability, and statistics. Students will learn a variety of methods to solve basic and complex linear equations, linear inequalities, systems of linear equations, and how to graph these functions. Students will apply these topics to real-life situations as they learn problem-solving techniques. In addition to these topics, students in Algebra I will cover additional concepts including performing operations on polynomials, factoring polynomials, graphing quadratic equations, using the Quadratic Formula and performing operations on rational expressions. Students will use technology for math games, instructional videos, introduction to graphing on computers and the use of spreadsheets.

# Physical Education

## Physical Education

*Year-long course, meets every other day, required of 7th and 8th graders*

The physical education program offers a wide variety of activities to assist students in developing interests and skills. The goal is to provide enjoyable activities in which the students can meet with success. Individual, team, lifetime, and fitness units are offered. The lessons focus on participation, fundamentals, sportsmanship, motor skills, and student interaction.

## Life Skills

*One semester course, meets every other day, required of 7th graders*

Life Skills is a class designed to give students a better awareness of the effect their choices have on themselves and the people around them. Emphasis is on healthy decision making, refusal skills and peer pressure. Topics include race and stereotypes; computer safety and awareness; tobacco, alcohol and drug awareness; and global awareness.

# Religious Studies

**All students are required to take religious studies. Seventh graders must choose one of the offerings.**

## Religious Studies 7

*Year-long course, meets every other day, open to 7th graders*

This course introduces all major aspects of Christ's life including the prophets' foretelling of Jesus's birth, the infancy narratives, the beginning of His ministry, His parables and lessons as well as Christ's death and resurrection. The course also includes a survey of Scripture, which focuses on the development and creation of the Bible and the historical background of the gospel writers. Much of the course includes the study of the gospels and the context in which they were written.

## Religious Studies 7 Seminar

*Year-long course, meets every other day, \*open to 7th graders*

Religion 7 Seminar focuses on the same fundamentals as the Religious Studies 7 course; however, it is delivered in a seminar-style format and will include additional off-campus field trips. This course sets a precedent in how students interact and understand faith in relationship to who they are as people, how they treat others, how they understand a larger community, and how they serve the world. The Religion 7 Seminar will incorporate a new model of theology curriculum where students engage in dialogue and discussion, based on theological texts, for a large portion of class. Additionally, there will be alternate learning experiences where students are exposed to professional speakers, becoming aware of local institutions and non-profits, and gaining a greater understanding and empathy for the larger community.

*\*If the number of course requests exceeds the maximum class size, students will be drawn from a pool. Remaining students will be placed on a waitlist.*

## **Religious Studies 8**

*Semester course, meets every other day, required of 8th graders*

In this course, students are introduced to multiple themes that help them explore their spirituality and involvement in the community. While examining the formation of the Christian faith and development of current practices, students study the components that create the Catholic identity. This course includes an examination of communal and personal beliefs, an introduction to various forms of prayer and worship, and an understanding of the holy sacraments.

## **Global Social Justice**

*Year-long course, meets every other day, required of 8th graders*

Global Social Justice (GSJ) is a Catholic theology course that connects social justice with current events. While exploring the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, students apply Christian values to current world issues and examine ways they are called to action. Through the study of our Christian calling to be active in the world, students explore various world issues, discuss the impact of these issues on our global community, and what can be done to eliminate and prevent various problems. In collaboration with other disciplines, students are able to connect faith in action with broader world issues.

# **Science**

## **Life Science 7**

*Year-long course required of 7th graders*

In this course students examine living systems, their interactions and interdependence. Areas of study include the scientific method and inquiry-based investigation, plants, animals, microorganisms, genetics, the human body, ecology, and the effects of humans interacting with the environment. Special emphasis during the year is placed on current events in science-related technology.

## **Earth Science 8**

*Year-long course required of 8th graders*

In this course students explore the natural processes at work in the atmosphere, lithosphere, and hydrosphere of the Earth, as well as Earth's place in the universe. This class includes an introduction to geology, meteorology, and astronomy. Special emphasis during the year is placed on local geology and current events. Technology will be used throughout the school year as a tool for teaching as well as learning.

# Social Studies

Each year, junior high students have the opportunity to participate in field experiences as an extension of the Social Studies curricula. Experiences are optional and require an extra fee to cover the costs of travel. In past years these opportunities have included trips to Boston to study the American Revolution, Washington, DC, to study our nation's history and government, a tour of Civil War battlefields, and a Civil Rights tour of southern states.

## United States History 7

*Year-long course required of 7th graders*

Seventh grade United States history concentrates on the period of time between human migration to the North American continent and exploration of the western hemisphere. Included are the following units: American Indians, West African History and Culture, European Exploration and Colonization, the Revolutionary War, the U.S. Constitution, the Age of Jefferson, and the War of 1812.

## United States History 8

*Year-long course required of 8th graders*

Eighth grade United States history focuses on the following topics: Jacksonian Democracy, immigration, reform movements, western migration, internal conflicts, slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the transition to the 20th century, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II & the Holocaust, the Korean Conflict, Vietnam, the Civil Rights Movement, the Cold War and modern day topics.

## The American Experience

*Year-long course \*available to 8th graders (Extra fee required.)*

*The American Experience* is a uniquely formatted interdisciplinary class facilitated by two teachers over an 80-minute block. In *The American Experience*, students are presented with and consider multiple perspectives of American history while reading, interpreting, and evaluating interrelated literature to enhance their understanding and comprehension of key terms, concepts, and themes. In addition, the class offers learning opportunities beyond the classroom during which students connect their experiences to their studies.

***\*Students are given the opportunity to apply for this course. If the number of applicants exceeds the maximum class size, applicants will be drawn from a pool. Remaining applicants will be placed on a wait list.***



# World Language

## Chinese I

*Year-long course*

The course is designed for students with little or no prior experience in the language. The course will focus on pronunciation, character recognition and typical simplified Chinese characters, writing and reading. Various supplementary listening materials will be used from the beginning of this course to give students an authentic and practical way to learn correct pronunciation and reinforce class lessons. Students will also be exposed to Chinese language and culture via movies, real world situations and cultural highlights.

## Chinese II

*Year-long course*

This course is designed for students who have had some prior experience to the Chinese language. Throughout this course, students will develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. However, the emphasis in this course will be on building up students' communicative competence in oral and listening skills. Reading and writing will be introduced yet this class will focus heavily on communication in Chinese.

## French A

*Year-long course*

French A offers the opportunity to begin the exploration of the French language, which connects students to 175 million French speakers in more than 50 countries. Our exploration of Francophone culture will include Quebec, the Caribbean, West and North Africa, and Europe. Throughout this course, students will focus on all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) through a wide range of activities including pair and group work, role-playing, listening and reading. Students will be corresponding with French "epals" throughout the year, thus offering real life applications to students' growing language capacities. An opportunity to attend an immersion weekend at Concordia Language Villages in Bemidji, MN will also be offered. Vocabulary topics include: introductions, description, preferences, numbers, colors, time, family, school, weather, seasons, months, and daily routine. Grammar topics include: present and immediate future tenses for essential verbs, possessive adjectives and adjective/noun agreement.

## French B (Prerequisite: French A)

*Year-long course*

French B offers 8th graders the opportunity to continue their exploration of the French language as well as the Francophone culture. Throughout this course, students will focus on all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and culture through a wide range of activities including pair/group work, role-playing, listening and reading. Students will continue their correspondence with French "epals" throughout the year and will also have the opportunity to host a French student for 10 days in February or 3 weeks over the summer. An opportunity to attend an immersion weekend at Concordia Language Villages in Bemidji, MN will also be offered. Vocabulary topics explored include: café food, clothing, shopping, house, places in a town, and travel. Grammar topics include: a review of all verbs studied in French A, additional irregular verbs and *le passé composé* tense. Students will do units on Paris monuments and art history. They will also read a short novel, written for beginning-level students, called "*Pauvre Anne*".

# Latin I

*Year-long course*

This course introduces students to the Latin language. Students learn the introductory grammar and vocabulary necessary to read beginning Latin texts. Connections between Latin and English are emphasized to help students increase their English vocabulary. Students improve their verbal abilities and reading skills through class activities, games, and projects. Students also learn about the culture and history of Ancient Rome, and how they have had an enduring impact on our current world.

# Latin B

*Year-long course*

This course introduces students to the Latin language and to ancient Roman history and culture. The course focuses on grammar and vocabulary building with an emphasis on the connections between Latin and English. Through increasingly complex Latin readings, students move chronologically through the classical period, from early Roman literature to the writers of the early Roman Empire. Cultural and historical perspectives are broadened through supplemental materials, class discussions and projects.

# Spanish A

*Year-long course*

Comparable to a first semester high school World Language course, Spanish A focuses on expanding students' vocabulary and composition skills through various reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. Students will be able to ask and answer questions and give information regarding the following themes: hobbies, descriptions, school life, mealtime, places in the community, invitations, making plans, and sports. Students also explore the culture and history of Spanish speaking countries and learn to appreciate the diversity of other cultures around the globe. Students also explore a variety of cultures with celebrations of Hispanic holidays throughout the year.

# Spanish B (Prerequisite: Spanish A)

*Year-long course*

Comparable to a second semester high school World Language course, Spanish B expands students' vocabulary, composition, and conversational skills through various reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. Specific units of study include the family, shopping and clothing, vacation and travel, entertainment, and the environment with an increased focus on vocabulary acquisition and basic present and past tense structures. Students will acquire pen pals from a Spanish speaking country in the second semester to interact with a native Spanish speaker while demonstrating advanced communication skills, reading comprehension, and sentence structure. Through the pen pal exchange, students will break down stereotypes and uncover cultural biases. Additionally, students will explore the global influence of the Spanish language through music and movies.